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EPA to Exterminate Some d-CON Rat Poisons

Federal agency tells 12 d-CON products to “Get Out” of Walmart and other retail stores
<http://www.abcbirds.org/newsandreports/releases/130130.html>

MEDIA RELEASE

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Red-tailed Hawk by Owen Deutsch

(Washington, D.C., January 30, 2013) The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) today figuratively flipped the advertising slogan “Get Out” used by d-CON rat-poison manufacturer Reckitt Benckiser right back at them by announcing the Federal Government’s intention to ban the sale of 12 d-CON mouse and rat poison products.

EPA’s action follows its draft Notice of Intent to Cancel issued in 2011. That notice was based on EPA’s 2008 conclusion that certain rat-poison products cause “unreasonable risk” to people, pets, and wildlife under federal pesticide laws. At that time, EPA ordered companies to re-formulate their rat-poison products in protective bait stations and to stop marketing “second generation” anti-coagulants – brodifacoum, bromadiolone, difethialone, and difenacoum -- on the consumer market, instead limiting their sale to large containers from agricultural stores.

“American Bird Conservancy commends the EPA for its painstaking and meticulous evaluation of these dangerous rat-poison products. We support the common-sense solutions outlined in the cancellation decision,” said Cynthia Palmer, Pesticides Program Manager for American Bird Conservancy (ABC), one of the nation’s premier bird conservation organizations. ABC has been leading the National Pesticide Reform Coalition in efforts to rein in the use of these rat poisons, given the devastating impacts on children, pet dogs and cats, and federally-protected raptors including hawks, owls, and eagles. The organization has been presenting testimony, conducting outreach to manufacturers and retailers, and assembling incident reports on pets and wildlife killed by these poisons.

“ABC applauds those companies, such as Bell Laboratories, that have put children’s health and animal welfare above corporate profits and made responsible changes to their products. And we welcome Good Housekeeping’s announcement that d-CON products will no longer carry its Seal of Approval,” Palmer said. In addition, Target and certain other retailers have pulled from their shelves rodenticide products that do not comply with the EPA decision.

EPA gave the manufacturers three years to conform to the safety improvements called for in its 2008 decision. Most companies acted responsibly and made the necessary adjustments. But the \$37 billion company Reckitt Benckiser, maker of products ranging from Woolite and Lysol to French's Mustard, chose to fight the EPA's science-based conclusions. The company has continued to sell its d-CON poisons as loose pellets and pastes and to peddle to residential consumers the most toxic formulations.

American Bird Conservancy is calling on d-CON's manufacturer, Reckitt Benckiser, to abide by today's cancellation decision rather than begin a lengthy and fruitless appeals process that will stall needed protections for kids, pets, and wildlife.

The degree of d-CON's recalcitrance is unparalleled in recent history. When EPA issues a Risk Mitigation Decision under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), it is standard practice for companies to comply.

As ABC's Palmer explains, "Sometimes the affected industries negotiate a compromise. But to outright refuse to conform to a Risk Mitigation Decision under FIFRA, and then to tie up the agency in years of administrative and judicial proceedings, has not happened in more than 20 years."

Palmer added that Reckitt Benckiser has fought this issue for many years already, while its d-CON products cause needless sickness and death. "It is time for d-CON to put children's health and animal welfare above corporate profits and to follow the rules like every other rat-poison manufacturer. It is time for d-CON to get it right or 'Get Out,'" she said.

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American Bird Conservancy (ABC) is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit membership organization whose mission is to conserve native birds and their habitats throughout the Americas. ABC acts by safeguarding the rarest species, conserving and restoring habitats, and reducing threats, while building capacity in the bird conservation movement.